



**Special Meeting  
January 20<sup>th</sup> 19:00**

**WHAM Studio Tour  
Midtown Plaza**

**Arranged by  
Paul Kolacki, K2FX**

Park in Midtown Parking Garage. The entrance to the garage is off Clinton north of the 490 exit. It is free after 6pm. Take the elevator to the M level to meet the group there. The tour begins at 7:00pm. Please join the group in time for the start of the tour.

**President's Soapbox Fred Groner, W2TZ**

Greetings & Good DX in 2004.

Santa Claus came to the W2TZ QTH and didn't leave that new DX beam antenna that I was hoping to find under the Xmas tree this year. Well, hope springs eternal, so may be next year will be a better year for beam antenna Xmas presents.

To get an early head start on the specific antenna I will add to my Xmas list for next year, I decided to see what latest and greatest antennas are available commercially. Force 12 antennas seem to be very popular the last few years so I spent quite a bit of time dreaming by reading the impressive Force 12 catalog. Shock and awe quickly set in because some of the Force 12 antennas are really impressive in terms of size and number of elements. Force 12 certainly has a wide variety of antennas to choose from,

ranging from 160 to 2 meters. Their multi-monoband antennas are an interesting concept, although it is not new. I am also impressed with the numerous mechanical details of their antennas, especially considering the wind as well as ice loading antennas as subjected to in Rochester, NY.

Force 12's attempt to describe the electrical performance of their antennas, however, while somewhat informative, gives rise to numerous questions concerning validity. I always chuckle a little when amateur radio manufacturers quote antenna gain specifications. Force 12, like most other antenna manufacturers, have what appears to be a tremendous urge to quote gain specs. Force 12 goes over board with their gain spec justification, devoting numerous pages to the subject of gain performance. Force 12 states that "all (their) specifications are accurate and can be verified by computer modeling, as well as real time use and testing using a vertical track or chamber." Computer modeling, however, is just what the name says, modeling. Change the model and you change the gain, depending on the assumptions on which the model is based. They do a lot of hand waving based on what they call "an antenna at a typical height of 74'." I would have thought a typical antenna height would be 40' to 50' - not 74'. My beam would be at 50' so how valid are 74' specs at 50'. Many similar questions could be raised. I don't know what they mean by the term "real time use." Your guess is as good as mine, but it sounds like subjectivity to me, not actual measurement. A "vertical stack or chamber" sounds technically impressive, but I would love to see a picture of the Force 12 vertical stack or chamber for 40, 80, or 160 meters!

Force 12 seems very confident that their "TrueSpec" gain specs are valid. QST for many years did not allow antenna manufacturers to quote gain specs in their QST advertisements, or in QST's antenna product reviews. I agree with QST, mainly, in my opinion, because antenna specs are one big mess. Each manufacturer comes up with their own specs. Who knows what to believe. May be someday technology will exist which will allow reliable standardized measurements of antenna performance so different antennas could be compared. When the day

comes when QST will quote antennas specs, that day will have arrived. When I see QST printing Force 12 specs, then I will view Force 12s specs as valid. Until that day arrives, I will view Force 12s gain specs, and other antenna manufacturers, as questionable.

So I hope Santa next year, will choose my antenna on the many other factors important in choosing an antenna, and take antenna gain specs with a grain of Rochester salt. Nuff said!

CU at the January RDXA meeting.

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## **RDXA Finances Charles Kuhfuss WB2HJV**

The RDXA financial report as of January 3, 2004 is as follows:

Current checking balance	\$1636.79
Petty cash	\$100.00
Total available funds	\$1736.79
Less memorial fund	(\$726.89)
Total operating funds	\$1009.90

The RDXA currently has 51 paid members.

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## **The RDXA Logbook by RDXA Members**

*The articles in this series are composed of input solicited from general members on a particular theme. They are written by you! We will have a different theme each month. Just email your input to the editor at n2rd@arrl.net and it will be in the logbook.*

*This month's theme is:*

***DXing – Snagging the rare QSO and QSL***

### **Bob, W2RLK:**

I have 90 countries verified by 'real QSL' and 115 worked. Most all of the countries have been worked during the 'big' contests - CQ WW phone and CW, CQ WPX, ARRL DX phone and CW and now RTTY roundup (my first was last weekend!)

My first station after a long hiatus from amateur radio (I was licensed in 1969 as WB2HWI) was a Radio Shack HTX-10 (25 W SSB) into a 10M inverted vee in the attic. I worked about 50 countries with that set-up and then worked about 30 more after I put a 140 W homemade amplifier in the mix. (all on 10M or course..)

Last year I got a ICOM FT737 and recently switched from a 66 foot random wire in the attic to a Hustler BTV-6 trap vertical. A few more contests and now I'm up to ~115 worked. It seems really slow going now...even with more bands, better receiver, etc... I only worked a couple of new countries on the CQ WPX contest. Mostly, it's the same big guns from the same countries...And with my setup I should

REALLY spend more time on the CW contests, but I must admit I am not much of a CW op.

I QSL through the bureau, and also use green stamps and direct mail, especially on stations that have QSL managers. About 30 stations of my 90 verified were direct mail.

For contesting I use Genlog 4.2, converting the ADIF output files to my general station logger Prolog (which does accounting for awards like DXCC). A simple set-up all around and one that didn't bust the bank...but limited results! I gotta say that I am really happy, and will be even happier when those final 10 QSLs come in and I can get that DXCC wallpaper!

My radio operations tend to come in bursts, like contesting, so I don't pay much attention to the packet DX network, even though I am now set up for packet on '91.

### **Mark, K2AXX**

Was working well into Europe on 50MHz, via a skewed path opening over Africa. I, F, OE, 9A and others were in the log, when I heard a DL calling me weakly. My antennas were pointed at 120 degrees, and moved them to a direct-heading for DL. His signal improved dramatically, and I discovered that there were now 2 paths into Europe! Continued CQing on 50.105 MHz, and worked 5B4FL. That was a thrill (though I'd worked him a few days before), and continued onwards. Worked LY, ES, SM, another DL - then I heard "9NX". QRZ? JY9NX. He called ME. We worked, passing 559 reports back and forth! WOW, Jordan on 50MHz!

Immediately, I start shaking. That was the COOLEST thing ever! Later that day, I get an email from a fellow 6m DXer, saying "CONGRATS! You were the ONLY STATION Koji heard/worked that day". Kewl.

Popped a QSL to his manager in Japan, and a few weeks later it came! That was country #124, and a GREAT one at that!

### **Charlie, WB2HJV**

As I try to think of a specific QSO and QSL and in so doing my memory slipped back a few decades; to those dark ages before computers (BC), DX Clusters and published QSL routes. From my experience if one didn't get the QSL manager info on the air most often he/she was out of luck. There was more reliance on the QSL buro, or so it seemed. I remember working places like Guam, Okinawa, American Samoa, Gitmo, US Antarctica, the Canal Zone, etc. when it was required to have the correct APO address. Box 88 Moscow of course covered, supposedly, all of the USSR. I always seemed to get lots of QSL's through the buro for Russian contacts, but they were never in direct response to the ones I sent. Eventually I got them all; Russian states that is.

Senegal in West Africa...it took me at least eight to ten Q's over twenty-four years to get a QSL out of this place. I think the op's bought their kids shoes and the xyl a new loin cloth with my green stamps!

I first heard Malawi (7Q7) back in the late sixties...just logged 7Q7BP on December 23rd for a new one.

Another struggle for me is Monaco (3A2). Have heard Laura 3A2MD on the bands for several years but she's always in the soup, year after year. Got excited once after working 3A2DX only to find out it was Slim the Pirate.

For years, to request a QSL I would always include a picture postcard of my home QTH in Dunkirk, a handwritten note, plus green stamps and a self-addressed envelope. That process worked fairly well. Lately I wait a year or so and if no reply I send the op a politely written e-mail, stating my concern over a possible lost QSL. I've had a 95% success rate with this technique; including AP2JZB, FZ5WL, A61AJ and 3B9FR.

In the 70's and 80's instead of buying a current World Callbook every year, I would call the Technical Resource Center at the Rundel Library to get the needed addresses. That was always frustrating as the line was busy 90% of the time and then too the librarian always seemed to struggle with call signs.

Thirty years ago I stumbled upon Crozet FT5W by accident, and then Desecheo I. KP5 shortly thereafter. No problem with those QSL's. I had no idea how rare they were and are until I joined the RDXA. Maybe someday I'll catch by happenstance BS7, VU4, P5, VU7, 3Y/P, 7O, FR/J&E, KP1 or YV0. Well, one can always hope anyway.

The QSL with the largest impact now comes to mind. The year was 1964, February I believe. It was a school night. I was supposed to be studying for a "Merchant of Venice" exam the next day. Mom and dad were out for the evening and temptation got the best of me. I fired up the old HT-37 and Drake 2A on 80 meter cw and came across a yl named Kris WA5 something or other. Amazing, she too was studying for a "Merchant of Venice" exam. That William Shakespeare dude sure got around. All was well until the following week when her QSL came, which of course Mom read since I was at school when the mailman arrived. Those were the days before Mom went to work and had time for such things. This Kris WA5??? proceeded to tell me she had received an A on her exam and wanted to know how I did, as did now my mother. Somehow my D didn't carry much weight and that little episode put me in the QRT mode for CQ DX on school nights for the remainder of the school year, or until my grades improved in Shakespeare, the latter of which of course didn't happen. *That was one QSL card I didn't need!*

I did "sort of" learn then that it's just a hobby...but I still struggle with the temptation to get on the air; like before work in the morning, lunchtime on the mobile, before dinner, before bed, et al. Even now as I bang on the keyboard I've slipped 10 minutes past the end of lunch

rambling on about DX...some things just don't change. What a great vocation...oops,

I mean avocation!

Best DX to all and I hope you receive the QSL's for which you're waiting.

### **Ed, K2MP**

One of the oddest DX QSO/QSL sequences for me was years back and the quest for Andorra, C3. Old timers in the club, Al WB2BNJ, and other told me that this was a hard country to get a QSL out of. One day on 20 SSB I heard a C3 and another European in what seemed like a heated argument over QSL'ing. It seems as though the C3 was being accused of accepting QSL's, greenbacks, IRC's but rarely responding. Now, this was pre-internet time and all we had was the Callbook (flying horse) magazine, a pulp-paper GO List and Don Chesser's DX magazine as reference.

It so happened that I had those open in front of me and upon checking found that the C3's address in the callbook was wrong compared to the others. I immediately tried to break in (this was also the days of a TS-520 and 4BTV vertical) kept yelling "callbook wrong, callbook wrong" until he finally heard me. I read to him his callbook address and it turned out the zip code given was for Italy and no mail would be forwarded. Problem solved. I told him I would contact the callbook company and fix his address. I followed that up with a letter to him, a copy of the bad address and my letter to the callbook with corrections. I happened to also enclose my QSL and SASE. I got my C3 confirmation via airmail in two weeks!

### **Dave, N2CK**

I would respectfully submit that I'm not as gifted in that arena as are others, like Chris, K2CS. The real experts were Fred, K2FR and Bill, W2OMV. But that said, I'll try to pass along what I know.

Most of the "rare" DX I've been able to work and QSL have been DXpeditions. When attempting to work a DXpedition, always spend time looking for the operators listening frequency. Instead of calling blindly in their "listening window", bounce back and forth between VFOs until you can zero beat on the station just worked. During a phone pileup, listen for a natural voice quality from the station just worked. Then alternate calling and listening again - in case the op changes his listing frequency.

Sometimes it is possible to identify patterns. If you are waiting in a phone pileup and the operator changes his listening frequency, be prepared to look below his calling frequency, instead of above. There have been a few times I've worked stations below where they said they were listening. I feel they may do this to help minimize the pileup. When in doubt they copied your call correctly, take

the time to ensure a valid exchange NOW, instead of getting your card returned with a "Not in Log" notation. He heard you at the time, make sure he accurately copied all you sent - you may not get another opportunity on that band.

For QSLing, always follow directions given, either by the operator, or by following the QSL directions given on the website for the DXpedition. I always include money of some sort, usually dollars, unless otherwise indicated. If QSLing to a stateside manager, ALWAYS include a SASE. Also, as a "Little Pistol", I like to jot down station particulars on the back of my card - kind of a brag session of the station I have assembled. I have also been known to drop a little extra contribution for the QSL manager - to cover postage, and whatever costs might arise.

Hope these hints help.

### **Irv, AF2K**

Well, can't say I have a memorable tale to relate as far as snaring a rare one and getting the card, but I guess I can share the following brief story which could be put in the "Prized Possession" category:

Back on August 4, 1995, I had the pleasure of enjoying a brief QSO with His Majesty King Hussein of the Kingdom of Jordan, JY1, now a Silent Key. I was indebted to Ruthie K2ZZQ and her acquaintance Mike OE6MBG for "arranging" the contact and it was indeed a memorable conversation with this most admired world figure. The beautiful card, suitable for framing, arrived in short order from the king's QSL Manager, WA3HUP.

### **Paul, K2DB**

Well, K2DB is back on the air, in a condo at the bottom of a valley, with 5 watts and an indoor dipole antenna. Here is the story, back in 1998, due to some personal problems, I went off the air, divorced, sold the house, etc.

Guess that was the best move of my life, except for amateur radio. In early 2000, I decided I was going to buy a QRP kit, and I did. I purchased a Red Hot Norcal 20, QRP CW Transceiver from Red Hot Radio. It was one of the best QRP rigs available at the time, best receiver, built in keyer, RIT, and 5 watts output, and the most important thing, it was CW only. I started to build it back then and it is one of those kits that has you build a section, and then test it before you continue. Well, I built the first section, and it did not work. I tried to fix it, but I guess my heart wasn't in it, so back in the box it went.

Another year later, I called Gary, N2JGU from Embedded Research (the TICK Keyer Guy) and talked to him, knowing that he had built one of these rigs, and was an avid QRP fanatic. Gary said sure, bring it over and I will look it over and get it running. I did that, and after another year or two, decided to call and get my rig back. Gary had moved, is basically out of the business and is remodeling

his new home, so I don't blame him for not having time to check it out. The rig sat in the box, and just before Christmas, I decided that I would take it out and build it. What a blast, I quickly found that I had wound the toroid coil in the VFO oscillator the wrong way, and installed the FET in the wrong holes. Yeh, finally after about 4 years I can go onto step 2. I continued and finally finished the receiver section of the rig (after a few more minor hic ups) and got it working.

Next step, hook up a 20 meter antenna, HUH ?? I am not ready for that, oh well, out to the garage grab some #16 insulated wire and RG59 and a calculator Let's see  $468/14.025 = 33.36$  feet x 1.03 (insulated wire in an attic, don't ask)= 34.37 feet / 2 = 17.18 feet for each side. I make up the dipole, crawl into the attic and install the dipole along the ridge board at the peak of the roof. Hook it up to the rig and viola - it works. I peak up the audio and receiver for maximum noise and go on and finish the transmitter section. Check it out and everything works, it eve puts out about 7 watts.

I set the output to 5 watts and on 12/29/2003 at 1929Z I call and work KA9UPI in Beaverdam, WI. What a rush !!!!! Yeh, on top of it, I get a FB 599 report. The same day at 2057, I call and work YV5OV in Caracas and get a 569 report. WAS and DXCC / QRP are on the way. I am having a ball with this new rig, and since I got back on the air, the best DX I snagged with this 5 watts was calling CQ and having CT3/SM5CJW in Madeira Island come back to me. He was extremely weak, but we did exchange 539's and had a short rag chew. Found out he was running QRP also, @ 2 Watts.

So far as of this time, since 12/29/2004 I have made it my goal to work WAS and DXCC with this rig and indoor dipole, my tally is 28 states worked and 16 countries. I am having a blast, NO TVI and working about everything I hear, and the receiver in this rig is HOT ! Best of all, my fiancée' Marianne says that I am really happy when I am playing with that little city I built (she says the circuit board looks like an aerial view of a city when viewed from above), and that dit dah stuff !!!!

Next is to install a couple of mods, like XIT for those split pile-ups, and a serial port keying interface for CONTESTS! I am using N3FJP's Amateur Contact Log Version 2.5 and it is as good as I have seen for a low cost (\$19.95) general logging program, with all the bells and whistles.

I am back on the air !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

### **Gene, W2LU**

QSL's: I am not a big card collector - more interested in working DX than collecting cards - frustration, a lot of record keeping and expense.

Working DX - In order of importance :

Technique - being at the right place at the right time, timing, approach, watching packet, call recognition - being active on the bands and listen, listen, listen. Call clearly and with confidence, not apologetically mumbled.

Antennas - high and big Using a home designed and made LP - 7-60 Mhz, 46 foot boom, 15 elements on a scrounged 100 foot tower with an old \$5 prop pitch motor, 3 bent vertical dipoles on 80 - One driven / 2 parasitic refelecters ( 10-15db when switching directions - 120 degrees) and 3 Quarterwave sloppers on 160 - only 4-8 db difference in directions but worth it ! Also, four direction, dual, phased pennants for RX on 80 and 160 - not as good as beverages but does hear quite well.

Plenty of power: Using 1.5 kw heavy duty home design and made single 8877 amp - not as big as the many of the "big guns" but reliable, convenient, doesn't burn up the relays and coax and most often lets me work what I can hear.

**The RDXA Logbook Theme for February**  
**Soapbox: Sweepstakes or CQ WW**  
How did it go? Any visits from Murphy?  
Most memorable contact?

Just email your input to [n2rd@arrl.net](mailto:n2rd@arrl.net) by 12/2

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## The ARRL DXCC Challenge Award

Charlie Kuhfuss, WB2HJV



The ARRL DXCC Challenge Award is given for working and confirming at least 1000 DXCC band-entities on any of the Amateur bands, 1.8 through 54 Mhz. Entities for each band are totaled to give the Challenge standing. Deleted entities don't count for this award.

This is an award that can be earned with 100 watts using dipoles and verticals. A fair amount of patience and perseverance is required though, especially in the record keeping and QSL departments.

The key ingredients for me were the WARC bands plus my contest logs. About 90% of the Q's that I made were accomplished by running barefoot. I had a great time working towards this award, and now with 1258 worked and 1069 confirmed, I am well on my way to the 1,500 endorsement.

Listen, listen, listen and watch the spots.

Best DX to all,

Charlie, WB2HJV

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## DX & Contesting of the Past

January 1962 Ed Gable K2MP

In recent months there were three Dxpeditions, according to *DXMagazine*, that pointed out that even tiny DXCC countries such as Goa, Diu and Damao, could be made available only by visiting operators. Any one log those ? And logging you could as conditions were excellent on all bands and really hot on 80 and 40 meters. A little effort brought you; Marquesas Island FO8AN, by none other than traveling DX'er Danny Weil, VP2VB, Crozet Island, FB8WW (not yet a DXCC country, but pending) and British Guiana, VP3BL. On the local scene, the RDXA provided the programming for this month's RaRa Meeting. Recent elections brought these new RDXA officers; President Ernie Siegmund K2ITM, V-P Dick Bourne WA2HUW and Gus Becker, W2PHT, Secty-Treasurer. For some reason it was more fashionable back then to publish member's DX status. At that time the top RDXA DXCC guys were Sax, W2SAW and Ed, W2CNT, both with 290 mixed. However, the really, really long DX for the season was not logged by these guys, but rather by a well known local VHF'er, Hank Blodgett, W2UTH, who copied the very first OSCAR satellite beacon on 145 Mcs. Hank reported a lot of QSB but the HI HI HI CW beacon peaked at 50 dB above the noise. The first OSCAR had no transponder. There were no published contest results anywhere for this period. We'll catch up on those next month.

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## For Sale

Ed Gable, K2MP

Serious HF Yagi. Mosley PRO-95, 3 inch boom, 36 feet in length, 9 elements, five bands 20 - 10 meters, 5 kw rating, 150 mph design. Current model and in catalog at >\$2000. Disassembled and stored in Greece. Like new condition. Seller anxious but not unaware of value. Make offer to Ed Gable, K2MP, (585) 392-3088, or [k2mp@arrl.net](mailto:k2mp@arrl.net)

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**Rochester DX Association**  
**W2RDX** **www.rdxa.com**

This bulletin is the official organ of the Rochester DX Association. It is published monthly, September through June. Email your articles to the newsletter editor n2rd@arrl.net by the first Tuesday of each month for inclusion in that month's newsletter.

All those interested in Amateur Radio, especially in DXing and contesting, are invited to attend meetings and to join our club. The club meets at 7:30pm local time on the third Tuesday of each month from September to June. The club web site has the latest information on meeting location. It is currently schMany members meet at a local bar Scotch and Sirloin for camaraderie after the regular meeting. Come and join us!

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